

THE HON'BLE SRI JUSTICE L.NARASIMHA REDDY

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WRIT PETITION No: 27032 of 2005

Dt.20-12-2005

Between:

K.V. Ratnam, S/o Madhava Chary,
E.290761, aged about 52 years,
r/o H.No.303, Housing Board Colony,
Mahaboobnagar, Mahaboobnagar District.

...PETITIONER

AND

1. The Regional Manager,
APSRTC, Medak Region,
Medak District and 2 others.

...RESPONDENTS

ORDER: -

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The petitioner is employed as conductor in Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation. He was issued a charge sheet, dated 25-03-1998, on the allegation that he committed cash and ticket irregularities, while conducting the bus on 13-02-1998, and that he was required to submit the explanation, as to why necessary disciplinary action shall not be taken against him. The petitioner submitted his explanation to the same. On a consideration of the

same, the third respondent passed an order, dated 17-07-1998, imposing the penalty of stoppage of annual increment, for a period of two years, with cumulative effect. Hence, this writ petition.

2. The only point urged by the learned counsel for the petitioner is that the third respondent imposed the penalty of stoppage of annual increment, for a period of two years, with cumulative effect, without conducting departmental enquiry. He placed reliance upon the judgment of the Apex Court in ***KULWANTH SINGH GILL v. STATE OF PUNJAB***, and submits that stoppage of increment is a major penalty, and it cannot be imposed, except by conducting departmental enquiry.

3. Learned Standing Counsel for the respondents, on the other hand, submits that the penalty imposed against the petitioner itself is minimal, if the lapse on his part is taken into account.

4. It is a matter of record that the third respondent imposed the penalty of stoppage of annual increment, for a period of two years, with cumulative effect, on the basis of the charges levelled against him. Though the charge sheet was issued to the petitioner, before the penalty was imposed, no departmental enquiry was conducted. In ***KULWANTH SINGH GILL's case*** (supra), the Supreme Court held that stoppage of increment, with cumulative effect, is a major penalty, and it cannot be imposed, except by conducting departmental enquiry. In view of the same, the impugned order cannot be sustained.

5. In the ordinary course of things, the impugned order needs to be set aside, leaving it open to the respondent to pass fresh orders. To avoid further delay and complication in the matter, this Court is of the view that the impugned order can be treated, as the one for stoppage of annual increment, without cumulative effect.

6. Hence, the writ petition is partly allowed, directing that the order, dated 17-07-1998, passed by the third respondent, shall be treated as the one for stoppage of annual increment, for a period of two years, without cumulative effect, and that the

petitioner shall not be entitled for any monetary benefits, upto the date of this order.
There shall be no order as to costs.

JUSTICE L. NARASIMHA REDDY

Dt.20-12-2005

GLV